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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

Editor—A. Q. Niaz, B.A.

XLII, No. 5

ay, 1943

QADIAN
njab : India

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Review of Religions

Vol. XLII May 1943 No. 5

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

IN THIS HOUR OF TERRIBLE DISTRESS

By Sh. Abdul Hakim

To-day when the air resounds with war's alarms—the roar of Fighter and Bomber planes, the whistling and crashing of bombs, when tanks are hurled against tanks in deadly combats and artillery thunders day and night, and men in the prime of life are mown down in millions; when the people of all nations mourn; when all are in distress and greatly perplexed, there is need that we should pause and try to ascertain the cause of this distress and learn to apply the correct remedy.

We seem to look above, and long for something which shall take the animal blood-lust out of the human heart, which shall soften the anger, still the clamour, and proclaim the peace and brotherhood which all good men and true are earnestly seeking. Never within the memory of man has there been on earth such general sorrow and mourning as now. Never a time when the people needed comfort as they do now. Who can give the desired comfort? The Creator of heaven and earth, the Almighty God, whose name is Allah, is alone the source of all comfort.

Is it not a terrible thought that man has so perverted his genius that toiling, experimenting, testing, putting behind him thousands of failures, he is always intent on outdoing his neighbour by perfecting ever newer weapons of destruction?

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Animal passions rise and we often need a check. Truly the Holy Quran says, "Man's mind is prone to avarice," and this is the curse which has set the cultured and civilised European nations on their blood thirsty march. Eager for the possession of the lands and wealth of a weaker neighbour, seizing a favourable opportunity to invade and destroy a peace-loving inoffensive people, the troops advance, leaving a blackened trail behind them. Where is religion? Where is the sanctity of human life?

This question is often put nowadays, and so far few seem to have received a satisfactory reply. Christianity has had nearly 2,000 years of trial in which to turn Europe into a Paradise upon earth, to so thoroughly dominate nations and rulers that they must obey its teachings in every hour. Let us not forget that Christianity has been all-powerful; no one dared lift a voice against her, and she ordered things as she chose. But what is the result? Is Europe peaceful, beneficent, moral, and just? Do men live in harmony and concord? Are the weak safe from the strong? Or do we have the sorry spectacle of the greatest empires of modern times flying at each others' throats, despatching thousands of men to the field of battle, spending millions of pounds to encompass destruction, turning peaceful fields into a veritable hell upon earth, and each side praying for victory. No wonder that learned men ask, "Why does not Christianity speak with authority to Christendom to-day?"

The answer is not far to seek: Christianity has lamentably failed. She is supposed to possess the hearts of these peoples; nominally, they are followers of her teaching, but in reality they follow their own selfish ways as admitted in the *Kingdom News*, London, dated January 15, 1941:—

> "As the totalitarian steam roller crashed throughout Europe it, crushed out the liberties of the people, freedom of conscience, and above all put an end to the open Bible and suppressed true Christianity. A 'black-out' of true Christianity has now been forced in Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Spain, Norway, Romania and Greece, in which countries the activities of Jehovah's witnesses have been suppressed and thousands of these true Christians detained in prisons.
>
> What power opposed to true Christianity is operating behind these scenes? These facts speak for themselves and obviously are not mere coincidences."

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What an irony of fate ! especially when we bear in mind that all this is taking place in the exclusive realms of the Master who came to destroy the devil and who, for his gentle teaching, has rightly been called the Prince of Peace. Has not the Church got any Power to reclaim her lost flock which has turned into a pack of ravening wolves and save the world from this terrible fate ? We are afraid not.

Just think for a moment of the terrible havoc in poor Belgium. She is a shuttle-cock between her stronger neighbours, and in her own territory to-day, as in days of the last Great War, despite the desperate valour of her sons, she is trodden under foot by a ruthless invader. Can any amount of compensation pay for the losses she has suffered ? Would all the gold in the world be of any use to her to bring back again a single life lost in her defence ? Think of all that men have suffered through this war, think of all the lands plundered and ravaged, the homes rendered desolate, the precious lives lost in this seething cauldron of blood ! Europe has been always turbulent : each country has fought with the other until there was no land left in that continent to quarrel about. Then mutual jealousy stepped in, but an "agreement" was formed which saved Europe from internal strife for some time as all its warlike energies were expended upon the Asiatic and African peoples, who were not so advanced in the use of the lethal weapons. At last came a check : Japan modernised her armaments and stopped aggression in the Far East. Thus the expansive efforts had to be directed into some new channel. Then Tripoli suffered ; after this the Balkans ; and the unfortunate inhabitants of these countries were placed in bondage to the stranger What a hollow sham the "Peace Conference" has proved! What a fraud bolstered up by nations who were ready to discuss—on paper—the question of "dis-armament." Then at last came the clarion cry again, the cry that called to a carrion feast, and Europe plunged into the greatest war that the world has ever seen.

Here was Christianity's opportunity ! Why did she not step in, and claim that war was contrary to her teaching ? But she preferred to remain silent, and no one can deny that Europe is demonstrating the absolute failure of Christianity. All its beautiful dogmas, all the conferences have utterly failed to direct man into the path of self-sacrifice, into the way of amity and peace. In appearance Europe was peaceful-looking, but in fact it was a slumbering volcano, all

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quiet and very deceptive—and all at once the fires broke out, the ashes and lava spread in all directions, engulfing cities and entire nations, ruining and wiping them out of existence. Let us remember the peaceful fields and beautiful cities of Warsaw, Amesterdam, and Rotterdam. Moscow and Stalingrad to-day are ruined places. Let us remember the architectural glories of these cities, these quaint towns. Now, alas, they lie in ashes!

This is the fourth year since the day that set ablaze this world-wide conflagration which has not only consumed everything best in humanity, but has brought all that was worst in man to the surface. Man has incarnated himself into the devil, or the devil into man ; all landmarks of civilization have been demolished and all signposts of humanity have disappeared. Even a Nero should feel ashamed of that desolation which has overtaken rich lands and beautiful cities. One fails even to imagine the horror of that cruel vandalism which knows no distinction between the military and the civilian, which makes no distinction between the battlefield or the hospital, whether on land or on sea ; which demolishes even the houses of God and schools, bringing innocent infants to a sudden annihilation.

Look upon the wide world, all was gloriously beautiful ; God had provided everything which tended to the harmony and happiness of humanity ; but man in his pride arose and misused those powers and faculties which God had given to him ; he thought only of triumph and glory, never of the hollow sham which victory over a weaker foe represented, never of those countless millions of lives lost, of man's labour of years destroyed. The world has to-day witnessed the failure of the Church and the war has exposed the Pharisaism of modern churches, and thus the world needs a religion based upon Truth, with the doctrine of " brotherhood of man " as its basic principle ; a creed shorn of mysteries and useless theological juggling ; a religion which shall unite man, instead of giving him material for differing from his neighbour. This is of vital necessity to-day, and we would recommend all earnest seekers after truth to put away bias, to fling prejudice to the winds, no longer to be guided by narrow principles, and not to read everything through specially coloured spectacles manufactured by a special school of thought. Let us be quite open and frank, let us come together and find out where we agree ; not waste our time condemning our fellow men because we differ on details.

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We all agree as to the existence of the First Cause, the Great Architect of the Universe, the one Supreme Being—God. Let us then consider that having formed and fashioned us, would he suffer us to wander alone and unguided in His vast universe. He has created everything for our needs; we have the air, the water, vegetation, minerals. He has given us the heat and light of the sun, and the radiance of the planets and lesser votaries of the night. He has provided us with reasoning power, with inventive genius, with adaptive faculties, and He has given everything into our hands to utilise to our own benefit. Is it to be supposed that after all this He would remain dumb, an idle spectator of the blunderings of the human race? Is it not logical to think that He reveals Himself to man throughout all ages. In Revelation it is necessary that man should understand; and therefore Allah, in His wisdom, has raised up men from among their fellows who have taught His will. Buddha, Krishna, Confucius, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad and Ahmad—did they not speak each with the tongue of the people? These great men, these prophets, have given us Divine guidance, and if we follow their teachings, shall we go astray? If we act upon their injunctions should we harm our neighbour, commit crimes or disturb the harmony of nature which reigns everywhere? Let us take these great men for our examples, let us imitate their lives, let us analyse their precepts, let us hear their message, let us do all we can, and ask strength from God, and peace and amity will result. **Why take some prophets and reject others? God is not a tribal Deity, He is the Creator of us all, our Sustainer, and speaks as surely today as He did in the time of the early prophets. Today He spoke to Prophet Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and through him God warned the world before hand that it was drifting towards a terrible calamity.**

In order to secure an everlasting peace, the world again needs a wider outlook of humanity which, demolishing all barriers of class, country, or race, may weld once more, as it did in the days of Muhammad (peace be upon him), all the conflicting elements of humanity into one harmonious whole. For this purpose God raised Prophet Ahmad in our age who proclaimed to the world in the following terms:—

In April 1905, Ahmad wrote:—

"As it is my duty to invite men and to deliver to them the message of my Lord, I, therefore, again

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inform the public and God bears witness that the fact has been revealed to me by divine inspiration that His wrath is kindled upon the world, for the vast majority are so deeply immersed in sinfulness and worldliness that they have no faith in God."

In 1906 writing in *Haqiqatul Wahy*, he said :—

"Do you think that you can be saved by your own plans ? That cannot be. Do not think that severe earthquakes have come in distant places in America only and that your country is safe, for I see greater distress is in store for you. Thou O Europe are not safe, nor Thou O Asia ! And ye that dwell in islands, no self made Deity will assist you on that day. I see cities falling down, and I find inhabited places in ruins. The Omnipotent God has kept silent for a long time while detestable deeds were done in His sight, but now He will show His face with great awe. Let him who has ears hear that the time is not distant. I strove hard to gather men under the protection of God, but it is necessary that the writing of fate should be fulfilled. I say to you truly that the turn of this country is drawing near. The days of Noah will you again witness, and the scene of Lot's land you will see with your own eyes. But God is slow in sending His wrath. Repent that mercy may be shown to you. He who forsakes God is a worm, and not a man, and he who does not fear Him is dead, not living."

Was ever a prophecy, we ask the gentle reader, fulfilled with greater clearness than the predictions embodied in the above warning ? These are prophecies the truth of which even an opponent will be forced to admit, for they are being fulfilled with a clearness which no one can deny. Religion, and only religion in its pristine purity is our salvation ; that alone can bring the milliennium on the earth. Let us walk humbly with the Lord. Let us not only preach brotherhood, but also practise it. Let us not condemn a man for a failing which may find its counterpart in our own frame ; let us be hospitable, charitable, religious in the noblest and truest sense of the word. Let us not seek aggrandisement, be self-sacrificing, think of others, speak ill of none, and protect the weak and aged. Here is the basis for the world-creed. You might want to know whether or not there does exist in the world to-day a system so broad so impartial, so practicable, so reasonable ; want to know if that creed is

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really carried into effect and its principles put into practice? The answer to this question is in the affirmative—there *is* such a creed, the same old religion that has existed since the world began, the simple belief which has remained unaltered, uncorrupted, but which so few in the Occident have ever studied. The Faith which gave hope to the slave; which abolished the great curses of drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution; the Faith which inspired men to be brave and bear all hardships and trials; which induced men to give their lives for their fellows gladly; the Faith which teaches perfect brotherhood; whose God is not the Deity of any particular people, but is the God of all; the creed which has abolished all class and colour distinctions; whose followers greet each other with "Peace be with you"; whose whole superstructure is broad and tolerant; which says "Let there be no compulsion in religion"; which gave the death-blow to all ideas of religious persecution; whose people are united all the world over; where complete freedom of thought is to be found. One may ask what is the name of this religion which the world is seeking to-day, and which will avert such scenes of blood and carnage for the future, which will weld the disunited masses into one whole?

The name of this religion means "Peace"—it is "Islam," as expounded by the Ahmadiyya Order.

May God enable us to accept the truth and relieve the world from the calamity we have been drawn into through the sordid selfishness of man. Let us glorify our God and again glorify Him. God Almighty and Gracious, Thou art our castle, Thou art our anchor: we beseech Thee to be our Protector, our Preserver, for there is no protection but with Thee and there is no refuge but in Thee. We trust in Thee. We hope in Thy Grace. We live in Thy forgiveness. Almighty and Everlasting God, uphold and strengthen us. Thou art our Keeper and Defender and our Castle. Deliver us for Thy mercy's sake out of all agony and grief and give us truthful joy, a sincere, quiet and happy conscience, and lasting Peace. Help us O our God for the glory of Thy name! (Amen).

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AL-QURAN—A UNIQUE BOOK

By ZAHUR-UD-DIN BUTT, B.Sc., LL.B.

Unique in origin

The Holy Quran is a unique book. It is unique in its origin. It was given to the world by an illiterate man. The Holy Quran and the reports show that the Holy Prophet of Islam was unable to read or write. The Holy Prophet's first reply to the angel who brought him revelation was that he was unable to read. "I am a man untaught" said he. The Holy Quran says "and you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand for then could those who say untrue things have doubted". (29 : 48).

This leaves no doubt as to the Holy Prophet of Islam being unable to read and write. Non-Muslim scholars who have made a special study of the Holy Prophet's life have come to the same conclusion. Writing about the Holy Prophet, Bosworth Smith in his book entitled 'Muhammad and Muhammadanism' says, "Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write, he was yet the author of a book which is a poem, a code of laws, a book of common prayers and a Bible in one, and is reverenced to this day by a sixth of the whole human race as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom and of truth. It was the one miracle claimed by Muhammad—his 'standing miracle' as he called it; and a miracle indeed it is."

Thomas Carlyle in his book entitled "Heroes and Hero Worship," writing about the Holy Prophet says "One other circumstance we must not forget; that he had no school-learning; of the thing we call school learning none at all. The art of writing was but just introduced in Arabia, it seems to be the true opinion that Mahomet never could write! Life in the Desert, with its experiences was all his education. What of this infinite universe he, from his dim place, with his own eyes and thoughts, could take in, so much and no more of it was he to know. Curious, if we reflect on it, this of having no books. Except by what he could see for himself, or hear of by uncertain rumour of

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speech in the obscure Arabian Desert, he could know nothing. The wisdom that had been before him or at a distance from him in the world was in a manner as good as not there for him. Of the great brother souls, flame-beacons through so many lands and times, no one directly communicates with this great soul. He is alone there, deep down in the bosom of the wilderness; has to grow up so—alone with nature and his own thoughts."

Unique in Preservation

The Holy Quran is the only scripture that has retained its original pristine purity. It has not gone through that slow and gradual process of metamorphosis that has changed the ancient scriptures. There is a verse in the Holy Quran which says, "Verily We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its Guardian (15: 9). This is one of the most wonderful prophecies the fulfilment of which is and ever shall be a standing testimony to the truth of the Holy Quran. Bosworth Smith in his book entitled "Muhammad and Muhammadanism," writing about the Holy Quran remarks: "The Koran is a book absolutely unique in its origin, in its preservation, on the substantial authenticity of which no one has ever been able to cast a serious doubt." Even so hostile a critic as Sir William Muir in his book entitled "Life of Mahomet" has to admit that "there is probably no other book in the world which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text".

Unique in being the most widely read book in existence.

The word Quran comes from the Arabic word qara-a. It means reading a book. Thus the word Quran means a book that is or should be read. The word in fact contains a prophecy. It is the most widely read book in the world. The Encyclopædia Britannica speaks of the Holy Quran as a book "that has been truly described as the most widely read book in existence".

Thomas Carlyle in his book entitled "Heroes and Hero Worship" writes:—

The Mahometans regard their Koran with a reverence which few Christians pay even to their Bible. It is admitted everywhere as the standard of all law and all practice, the thing to be followed in speculation and life: the message sent direct out of heaven which this earth has to conform to and walk by; *the thing to be read.* Their judges decide by it, all Moslems are bound to study it, seek in it for the light of their life. They have mosques where it is all read daily;

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thirty relays of priests take it up in succession, get through the whole each day. There for twelve hundred years has the voice of this Book, at all moments, kept sounding through the ears and the hearts of so many men. We hear of Mahometan doctors that had read it seventy thousand times."

Unique in its advocacy of virtue and denunciation of evil

The Holy Quran is unique in its advocacy of virtue and denunciation of evil. It accomplished a most wonderful transformation in the lives of its early votaries. Under the influence of this civilising book, from mere brutes they became godly men. In fact the Holy Quran lays claim to this very characteristic in its opening verse. It says :—

" This Book, there is no doubt in it, it is a guide to those who guard against evil." (2 : 2)

Non-Muslim scholars who have made a special study of the Holy Quran, have borne testimony to this characteristic feature of the Holy Quran. J. Davenport writes :—

It (The Quran) condemns debauchery and excesses of every kind, usury, avarice and pride, slander and calumny, covetousness, hypocrisy, the thirsting after worldly goods ; it ordains on the contrary alms-giving, filial piety, gratitude towards God, fidelity to engagements, specially towards orphans and without respect of persons, chastity and decency even in words, the ransoming of captives, patience, submission, benevolence, forgiveness of injuries, the returning of good for evil and the walking in the path of virtue not with the view of obtaining the approbation of the world but for being acceptable to God."

In Chamber's Cyclopædia, we have the following about the Holy Quran :—

" That part of Islam which most distinctly reveals the mind of its author is also the most complete and its most shining part. We mean the ethics of the Quran. They are not found any more than the other laws, brought together in one or two or three suras, but are like golden threads, woven into the huge fabric of the religious fabric of Muhammad. Injustice, falsehood, pride, revengefulness, calumny, mockery, avarice, prodigality, debauchery, mistrust and suspicions are inveighed against as ungodly and wicked; while benevolence, liberality, modesty, forbearance, patience and endurance, frugality, sincerity, straightforwardness, decency, love of peace and truth and above all trusting in one God and submitting to His will are considered as pillars of true piety and the principal signs of a true believer."

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SIDE-LIGHTS FROM GANDHIJI'S EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH

"But I shall leave the third class passengers at that, and come to my experiences in Benares. I arrived there in the morning. I had decided to put up with a Panda. Numerous Brahmans surrounded me, as soon as I got out of the train, and I selected one who struck me to be comparatively cleaner and better than the rest. It proved to be a good choice. There was a cow in the courtyard of his house and an upper storey where I was given a lodging. I did not want to have any food without ablution in the Ganges in the proper orthodox manner. The Panda made preparations for it. I had told him beforehand that on no account could I give him more than a rupee and four annas as dakshina,[1] and that he should therefore keep this in mind while making the preparations.

"The Panda readily assented. 'Be the pilgrim rich or poor,' said he, 'the service is the same in every case. But the amount of dakshina we receive depends upon the will and the ability of the pilgrim.' I did not find that the Panda at all abridged the usual formalities is my case. The Puja[2] was over at twelve o'clock, and I went to the Kashi Vishvanath temple for darshan. I was deeply pained by what I saw there. While practising as a barrister in Bombay in 1891, I had occasion to attend a lecture on 'Pilgrimage to Kashi' in the Prarthana Samaj Hall. I was therefore prepared for some measure of disappointment. But the actual disappointment was greater than I had bargained for.

"The approach was through a narrow and slippery lane. Quiet there was none. The swarming flies and the noise made by the shopkeepers and pilgrims were perfectly insufferable.

"Where one expected an atmosphere of meditation and communication, it was conspicuous by its absence. One had to seek that atmosphere in oneself. I did observe devout sisters, who were absorbed in meditation, entirely unconscious of the environment. But for this the authorities of the temple could scarcely claim any credit. The authorities

1. Gift. 2. Worship.

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should be responsible for creating and maintaining about the temple a pure, sweet and serene atmosphere, physical as well as moral. Instead of this I found a bazar where cunning shopkeepers were selling sweets and toys of the latest fashion.

"When I reached the temple, I was greeted at the entrance by a stinking mass of rotten flowers. The floor was paved with fine marble, which was however broken by some devotee innocent of æsthetic taste, who had set it with rupees serving as an excellent receptacle for dirt.

"I went near the Jnana-Vapi (Well of Knowledge). I searched here for God but failed to find Him. I was not therefore in a particularly good mood. The surroundings of the Jnana-Vapi too I found to be dirty. I had no mind to give any dakshina. So I offered a pie. The Panda in charge got angry and threw away the pie. He swore at me and said 'This insult will take you straight to hell.'

"This did not perturb me. 'Maharaj,' said I 'whatever fate has in store for me, it does not behove one of your class to indulge in such language. You may take this pie if you like, or you will lose that too.'

'Go away,' he replied. 'I don't care for your pie.' And then followed a further volley of abuse.

"I took up the pie and went my way, flattering myself that the Brahman had lost a pie and I had saved one. But the Maharaj was hardly the man to let the pie go. He called me back and said, 'All right, leave the pie here, I would rather not be as you are. If I refuse your pie, it will be bad for you.'

"I silently gave him the pie and, with a sigh, went away.

"Since then I have twice been to Kashi Vishvanath, but that has been after I had already been afflicted with the title of Mahatma and experiences such as I have detailed above had become impossible. People eager to have my darshan would not permit me to have a darshan of the temple. The woes of Mahatmas are known to Mahatmas alone. Otherwise the dirt and noise were the same as before.

"If anyone doubts the infinite mercy of God, let him have a look at these sacred places. How much hypocrisy and irreligion does the Prince of Yogis suffer to be perpetrated in His holy name ?"

—*An Autobiography.*

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POLYGAMY IN ISLAM

(Abdul Latif, B.A., Dar-ul-Mojahadin, Qadian)

Polygamy is one of those subjects which have been ruthlessly criticised by the opponents of Islam. It has often been alleged that Islam has laid the foundation of luxuriant life through this institution. The fact is that such people never pay due attention to the details of Islamic injunctions and, therefore, are not in a position to realise their importance and necessity in the various walks of life. Polygamy is indeed a very useful institution, which has been introduced by Islam as a safeguard against so many evils, and shortcomings. I would discuss its importance and worth in this article and prove the fulility of the objections raised by the opponents of Islam.

In order to understand the benefits of polygamy it is necessary to know the objects of Islamic marriage. The foremost object is as described in the following verse of the Holy Quran :

واحل لكم ما وراء ذالكم ان تبتغوا باموالكم محصنين غير مسافحين (سورہ نساء)

In this verse the object of the marriage is described in the word محصنين. It means that a Muslim should enter the matrimonial life in order to save himself from the evils of prostitution.

Another object of marriage is described in the following words :

هن لباس لكم انتم لباس لهنا (سورہ بقرہ)

That is, as the clothes are a source of protection against heat, cold and other trouble, similarly men and women should handle the matrimonial responsibilities in order to save themselves from social, physical and spiritual diseases. Then the Holy Quran says :

نساءكم حرث لكم فاتوا حرثكم انى شعتم وقدموا لانفسكم (سورہ بقرہ)

i.e., your wives are fields from where your further crops flourish. In this verse the necessity for the preservation of

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the human race has been stressed upon. Again the Holy Quran says:

خلق لكم من انفسكم ازواجاً لتسكنوا اليها وجعل بينهم مودة ورحمة (سورہ روم)

i.e., God has produced your wives amongst you, so that you may get a companion for life and derive pleasure, inspiration and rest through them.

In this verse the third object of Islamic marriage has been discussed. In this verse we are also told that Islam lays emphasis upon marriage because it is a source of pleasant life and at the same time a measure for the expansion of relations. It leads to the expansion and strength of the contacts among the relations of husband and wife and hence among various families and nations.

The facts mentioned above go to show that the Islamic Shariat has described four important objects of marriage.

(1) A preventive measure against prostitution.
(2) Preservation of human race.
(3) Source of pleasant life.
(4) Expansion of human relations.

If we meditate upon these objects underlying the Islamic marriages, we at once arrive at the conclusion that it is Islam only which has based this institution upon a very solid and excellent foundation.

The objects of polygamy are twofold. This first aspect of its objects is the same as discussed above. The second aspect of these objects is that which is particularly connected with polygamy.

The first object of *nikah* described above is chastity. It is as well a necessity of polygamy. Supposing a man cannot pull on with one wife. He may not be in a position to control his passions in the presence of one wife, who has to undergo periods of pregnancy, monthly courses and sometimes disease. It therefore becomes obligatory for him to marry more wives in order to lead a pious life.

The second object described above is preservation of the human race. It is just possible that a man's first wife may be barren; polygamy then is the only remedy.

The third object described is that marriage is a source of pleasure, inspiration and rest. It is just possible that the first wife may not fulfil these requirements of a man due to some permanent disease or madness. In this condition it is

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better to marry another wife in order to lead pleasant life.

The fourth object of Islamic marriage described above is that it leads towards expansion of human relations. It is just possible that a man may have married in a family where it was necessary for him to form relationship. But after some time there may arise more important and necessary occasions for him which may compel him to form relations with other families too. It would, therefore, be necessary for him to marry more wives in order to fulfil these needs.

In addition to the facts mentioned above, Islam has also described the reasons which strictly and directly justify the institution of polygamy.

The first of them is that men are naturally exposed to danger and death, especially in times of war; consequently there is often a huge disparity between the male and female population. The question arises how should we absorb the surplus number of women? The only solution lies in polygamy.

The second object of polygamy is described in the following words of the Holy Quran:

وان خفتم الا تقسطوا فی الیتمیٰ فانکحوا ماطاب لکم من النسآء مثنیٰ وثلث وربع۔ فان خفتم الا تعدلوا فواحدۃ (سورہ نساء)۔

This verse means that due to wars, there would be a good amount of orphans and you would stand in need of polygamy in order to safeguard their rights. If you find that you cannot discharge their rights upon you with the limitation of one wife, you are allowed to marry more wives: two, three or four but not more than that. It is obligatory for you to marry only one wife if you fear that you wont be in a position to treat equally in the case of more wives. This verse proves beyond a shadow of doubt that excess of orphans is a factor of paramount importance which justifies polygamy.

Then the Holy Quran says:

وانکحوا الایامیٰ منکم (سورہ نور)

We have suggested to you the institution of polygamy as a cure. You should make such an arrangement that no woman, young or old or a widow, should remain unmarried.

It is always ignored that Islam does not compel a Muslim to marry more wives than one. It only allows polygamy under certain conditions. The Holy Prophet

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restricted the number of wives and framed laws for the proper working of this institution. As has been described above, Islam has allowed polygamy only when a man can treat all the wives equally. Otherwise it is necessary for him to marry only one wife. Islam has described at length the details of the equal treatment with all the wives. It is obligatory for the polygamist that he should extend equal treatment towards all the wives with regard to time, attention money and behaviour. In short, he is duly bound to treat them equally in every respect except those emotions of the heart over which he has got no control. If a man studies the institution of polygamy keeping in view the conditions governing its justification, it becomes crystal clear that it is no less than a sacrifice which a husband has to make in the interests of society.

Keeping in view the beauties and useful aspects of polygamy no sane person can dare to raise any objection against it. It is really a very blessed and useful institution laid down by the Holy Prophet of Islam which is really a perfect and universal religion, which has made provisions for mankind in every walk of life, which makes his life pleasant and worth living, full of contentment and tranquillity. The Holy Quran would not have been the complete code of life that it is, had it not made provision against the circumstances which call for another marriage, nor would the Holy Prophet of Islam have been the complete model had he not left us an example in his own person in this respect as well. I would finish this article with the following words of the Promised Massiah, the prophet of the latter day (May peace of God be upon him).

"The words two, three and four are used in the Holy Quran beyond doubt about polygamy. In the same verse God has laid down that if a man is not in a position to treat all the wives equally, or his love abounds towards one or he is lacking in bodily strength or is a man of limited income, he should then not marry more than one wife. I think it is better that a man should not put himself under an obligation of his own accord. The Almighty God says:

ان الله لا يحب المعتدين

i.e., God does not love those who exceed the limits.

(*Malfoozat of the Promised Messiah*, p. 228).

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A GREAT SIGN—I

CH. ALI MOHAMMED, B.A.B.T.

This article deals with the death of Dr. Abdullah Atham, champion of the Christians in Northern India towards the close of the Nineteenth century. The story of Dr. Atham's death begins with an invitation-letter from some of the responsible and leading Christians of the Punjab to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad chief of Qadian, Punjab, asking him to have a debate on the fundamental principles of Christianity and Islam. Hazrat Mirza Sahib, who had claimed by this time to be the Promised Messiah and Mehdi, gladly accepted the invitation and proceeded with a small number of his chosen companions to Amritsar where the debate was to be held. The debate opened on May 22, 1893, under the joint presidency of Maulvi Ghulam Qadir Fasih of Sialkot and Dr. Henry Martin Clarke of Amritsar, and was led by Dr. Abdullah Atham, a retired Extra Assistant Commissioner, representative of the Christians and Ahmad of Qadian as representative of the Muslims. The debate continued for fifteen days running, ending on the 5th of June, 1893. The subjects of debate were as follows :—

1. Godhead of Jesus Christ.
2. Trinity.
3. Justice and Mercy of God.
4. Salvation.
5. Early Islamic Wars.

In the first part of the debate, the Leader of Islam was to criticize the Christian dogmas of faith and the Leader of the Christians was to answer the charges, while in the latter part the Christians were to criticize the Islamic dogmas of faith and the Muslims were to repute the charges. One of the fundamental conditions under which the great debate was to be conducted was that each assertion and the proofs thereof had to be produced from the sacred book in which each controversialist believed so that it might be known which of the two books—the Bible or the Quran, could speak for itself and was not dependent merely upon the support and augmentative reasoning of its votaries. This condition was included in the list at the suggestion and insistence of the Leader of Islam and had to be accepted

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by the Christians, though it is to be regretfully remarked that it was never adhered to but was always disregarded by the Leader of the Christians.

Both Ahmad of Qadian and Dr. Abdullah Atham were assisted, the one by Hafiz Hakim Noor-ud-Din of Bhera, Syed Mohd. Ahsan of Amroha and the other by Shaikh Allah Jwaya and Rev. J. L. Thakur Dass, Rev. Abdullah and Rev. Thomas Hovell of Lahore. It was a sublime controversy ever organised in India. Criticism and refutation followed successively on either side and reason after reason was put forth but was equally refuted by the opposing party. It was difficult to sift truth from falsehood and to know the right from wrong, so far as the argumentation was concerned, it was unendingly undertaken by the parties. For the time being it seemed that the great controversy would come to nought and the precious time spent was a mere waste. But it was not destined to be so. During the debate when Dr. Abdullah Atham was dilating upon the attributes of Jesus Christ as God and his powers as a Deity, the Leader of the Muslims suggested a very easy and simple way of proving the godhead of Christ. This was that the Christians should pray to him beseeching him to grant them a sign. If he (Christ) was the real and true God, he would certainly grant them a sign and thus prove his own identity as God and, at the same time save the honour of his followers. This will cut the knot at a stroke and put an end to the present and all future controversies between the Christians and the Muslims. But it was a hard nut to crack and the champion of the Christians clearly confessed his inability to adopt such a course. He argued that he had undertaken to prove the truth of Christianity only argumentatively and he felt absolutely no need for fresh miracles for old teachings, but if the Leader of Islam was anxious to perform miracles, he was at liberty to do so and the opposite party would fain see them performed. And lo on the following day the Leader of the Christians, by way of a jest, brought in three persons, one a cripple, another a dumb fellow and yet a third a blind man, and asked his opponent, the Leader of Islam, to cure them before the eyes of the whole audience so that they might be convinced of the truth of Islam as a vital spiritual force. But the Leader of Islam replied that curing the blind, the dumb and the lame was a sign of the Christians themselves as given in the New Testament: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," hence if he was a good Christian, he should lay his hand on the three persons

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present and cure them before the eyes of the whole audience. If they were cured, then the audience would come to know that Dr. Abdullah Atham was a good Christian. Again Jesus Christ says, "and these signs shall follow them that believe in my name, they shall cast out devils they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them." The Christian Leader was now in a fix and had to hide his head. At any rate the debate lingered on for more than a fortnight. The Leader of the Christians would neither come to give a living proof of his own religion which he was out to uphold, nor would he see eye to eye with the Muslim Leader as to the living proofs of the truth of Islam. On June 5, 1893, the last day of the debate, Ahmad of Qadian dictated his last paper and before he finished, he said that all this while he had been praying to God Almighty that He Himself might decide in this case so that people might come to know which way lay the truth and that in answer to his prayers God Almighty had revealed to him that *the party which knowingly conceals truth, leaves out the word of God and believes an humble man to be God is doomed to be thrown into the Haviah (hell) and shall be humbled* during the course of 15 months (taking one month for each day of the debate), provided *he turned not to truth*, and that whichever of the two was rightly guided and believed in one true God, shall be honoured and that when the prophecy came true some of the blind shall see, the cripples shall walk and the deaf shall hear.

So ended this sublime controversy between the Christians and the Muslims. As to the fulfilment of the prophecy, the time-limit was fifteen months till the end of which each party had to wait and see the efficacy of the prayer which clearly hinted at the death of Dr. Abdullah Atham and the humiliation of his companions who were a party to the debate. It was eagerly awaited by the Muslims and equally feared by the Christians, especially Dr. Abdullah Atham who, being the spokesman, was directly to be affected by the prophecy which had a great spell on him. After hearing the prophecy concerning his death he was in such a consternation that he absolutely refrained from participating in religious discussions; he wrote not a single word against Islam, its Holy Founder or against the Muslims in general as he was accustomed to before the prophecy.

There was a marked difference in his behaviour. He was absolutely changed, all his religious zeal had gone and

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he was passing his days in seclusion and retirement. He shifted from one place to another; one day when he had high temperature he suddenly exclaimed "I am caught." He was haunted by fear and so great was the awe of the prophecy that it weighed heavily upon him. While in Amritsar, he said that he had seen an educated serpent ready to attack him. He left Amritsar for fear of his life and went to Ludhiana to live with his son-in-law. The house was well-guarded by the police, still he imagined that he saw a number of men armed with spears enter the house and ready to attack him. He left Ludhiana for Ferozepur and took up his abode with his second son-in-law. Again he saw that men armed with guns broke into his house and were about to kill him. Such were the experiences which he would have during the course of fifteen months. His peace of mind had gone and he was like a man bewildered. The fate of other members who had participated in the debate was equally lamentable. Rev. Wright, a leading member of the party and quite a young man, died a sudden death. Rev. Hovell of Lahore fell a victim to a long and painful disease. Rev. Abdullah also shared the same fate and suffered terribly. At long last the time-limit came to an end and Dr. Abdullah Atham was still alive. He did not die as was expected by the Muslims and feared by Christians. There were jubilations wherever the Christians were to be found. A storm of opposition arose from one corner of the country to the other. Processions were organized and Dr. Atham was driven through the streets. Ahmad of Qadian was held in derision and foul language was used in its direct form. They said the prophecy did not come true for Dr. Atham was still alive. Nobody cared to ponder over the words of the prophecy which also said "*if he does not turn to truth.*" It was what may be called a conditional prophecy; the condition was that if Atham did not turn to truth he would be thrown into the *haviah*, but if the condition was satisfied the catastrophy could be averted. His changed attitude towards the Holy Founder of Islam whom he had called *ANTI-CHRIST* in his book *Andruna Bible* his aloofness from religious discussions and the silent and secluded life which he led after the prophecy was nothing less than turning to truth, which was the condition required. So God who is merciful and always slow to punish one who shows signs of repentance, had mercy on him. Like the people of Jonah, Atham availed himself of the change of heart and lived for about a year after the time-limit of the prophecy. We read in the

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Bible :—"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil, which he said he would do unto them, and he did not". (Jonah 3. 10.) But it was a brief respite ; when the time-limit was over, and Dr. Atham had time to recover from the shock, he began to show as if he were not afraid of the prophecy and was so bold as to assert that the Mirza Sahib had tried to administer to him poison and that a trained serpent had been let loose in his house at Amritsar and that men armed with spears and guns had been sent to kill him while at Ludhiana and Firozepur.

Well, if the allegations were true, why did he not report to the police and bring the author of the crimes to book ? But he did nothing of the sort. Being a man of judicial experience he knew how to deal with cases like these. Ahmad of Qadian challenged him to appear in a public meeting and testify three times on oath before the audience in the following words :—I, Abdullah Atham, declare on oath that during the course of 15 months I was not at all influenced by the truth and sublimity of Islam, nor had I been affected by the awe inspiring words of the prophecy. I never considered Islam to be the true religion, but, in fact, I firmly believe, as before, in the Godship, sonship, and atonement of Jesus Christ. If I am speaking falsehood, then O God Almighty, who knowest the secrets of my heart, do send Thy wrath unto me and cause me to die a sad and lementable death within a year hence." If Atham took up the oath he would be entitled to claim a sum of Rs. 3000 from his opponent. Ahmad of Qadian invited the public in general as well to urge Dr. Atham to take up the oath and claim the prize thereat. But Dr. Atham would not move in the matter. Ahmad of Qadian published as many as seven pamphlets inviting Dr. Atham to take the oath but the latter argued that it was against the principles of his religion to take the oath, which is apparently wrong, for did not the apostles swear.

When Dr. Abdullah Atham thus concealed the truth and refused to take the required oath, then Ahmad of Qadian published his last pamphlet, December 30, 1895, offering Rs. 4,000 to Dr. Atham if he would take the oath ; if he did not, then he was sure *to meet the wrath of God as previously revealed.* After the above mentioned date there was no more mention of Dr. Atham in his (Ahmad) writings and the case was left to the will of God. It was exactly seven months after the publication of the last pamphlet, December 30, 1895, that Dr. Abdullah Atham,

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champion of the Christians met his death on July 27, 1896, thus proving the truth of the Islamic prophecy and leaving his relatives and friends to mourn his lamentable death. Atham survived the ordeal for the first time owing to a marked and appreciable change in his attitude towards Islam and its Holy Founder, but when he *concealed this truth and refused the oath*, he was overtaken by punishment. It was a dual fight between Christianity and Islam, the result of which came clearly before the eyes of the public, and yet another dual between the two religions was to come some years after this and the world was to witness once more the truth of Islam as compared with Christianity in another part of the globe. That will form the subject of a separate article.

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BOOK REVIEW

Qadian—Headquarters of the Ahmadiyyah Movement (Urdu), by Shiekh Mahmud Ahmad Irfani, Editor of the '*Alhakm*,' Qadian, Rs. 2.

The author of this very interesting and useful book is the eldest son of Sheikh Yakub Ali Irfani, a well-known Companion of the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement since the very early days of its inception. As such, the elder Irfani, of course, is an eye witness of most of the events which form the history of the Movement, and Mahmud Ahmad Irfani is a worthy son of a worthy farther—well read and an able writer, afire to carry on the tradition of sturdy service and loyalty to the Movement established by his father.

The aim of the book is to give the reader enough information about the Ahmadiyyah Movement to enable him to form an opinion about its aims and objects, its place in the future of Islam, the progress so far achieved and the incalculable possibilities which lie hidden behind the veil of futurity.

Lucid, clear and forceful in style, the book grips the reader from the first page to the last, though in places it carries signs of hurried attempts to be brief while the pen longed to dwell lovingly on themes which, if developed properly could create volumes in themselve. On such occasions selection and brevity are not easy. The first half of the book is more vigorous and graphic but portions of the second half have suffered from brevity.

An admirable feature of the book is the vivid picture of Qadian on the eve of the advent of the Promlsed Messiah—a place unimportant and unknown, not on the map at all either politically, economically, socially, or in any other respect. And the contrast between Qadian as it was then and Qadian as it is now enables one to catch a glimpse of the glorious future which lies ahead.

The centre of interest, naturally of course, is the person, the claim, the teaching and the Mission of the Promised Messiah and the devotion of his followers to this sacred Cause. These

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portions of the book, feelingly written, are of absorbing interest and abound in quotations from the writings of the Promised Messiah himself.

In fact this publication seeks to cover such a vast and varied field that it was not possible to do full justice to it in view of the limitations imposed by space. But the author seems to have further publications in mind in which he would develop some of the themes he could do no more than barely point out in this book, and we look forward eagerly to the time when these shall be put before the public.

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